



SMART VILLAGES
New thinking for off-grid communities worldwide

PRESS RELEASE

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Smart Villages Launches the Off-grid Energy Challenge for West Africa

[Smart Villages](#) is pleased to announce the launch of the Off-grid Energy Challenge for West Africa. Building on the success of annual East African competitions in collaboration with the [Cambridge Development Initiative](#), this inaugural West African competition challenges entrepreneurs to tell us how they want to grow their existing businesses. Winners will work with consultant mentors through the Cambridge [Bridges for Enterprise](#) program and learn how to refine their business, address legal issues and raise funding.

The competition is open to entrepreneurs currently based in a West African country and running a business that could have a positive impact on West African communities beyond the reach of the electricity grid. Entrepreneurs who are running social businesses that generate or that can be powered by off-grid energy are invited to apply. We define social businesses as those that deliver positive social impacts to the end user in terms of poverty, unemployment or social issues.

Up to three winning teams will earn a spot in the Bridges for Enterprise training program starting in January 2017 and the opportunity to pitch to win \$5000 in prize capital to invest in their business.





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Bridges for Enterprise is a registered society at the University of Cambridge dedicated to supporting social entrepreneurs around the world. Since 2014, Bridges for Enterprise has been matching social businesses in East Africa and Asia with experts in business, finance and law to help those businesses become ready for commercial investment.

In collaboration with Bridges for Enterprise, The Smart Villages Off-grid Energy Challenge for West Africa is supported by the global Smart Villages Initiative, which aims to provide advice to policy makers on the potential for off-grid energy to deliver sustainable growth in the developing world.

According to Project Co-Leaders Dr John Holmes and Dr Bernie Jones, entrepreneurship is leading the way in off-grid energy access. “We are continually impressed by the entrepreneurs we meet around the world. In our recent work in West Africa we have already come across incredible energy innovation in agriculture, healthcare and education, and we look forward to supporting more entrepreneurs with this new competition.”

Full details on the competition can be found at e4sv.org/competition and the closing date for entries is 21st November 2016.

More information on the Bridges for Enterprise program course and other tracks can be found at www.bridgesforenterprise.com

Smart Villages Contact Information

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To access the Smart Villages image library please follow this link <http://bit.ly/1GxCuKE>

Notes for Editors

Smart Villages

The Smart Villages Initiative is a three-year project evaluating ways of providing off-grid energy as a catalyst for development for rural villages and encouraging the transfer of knowledge and experience between different developing regions. Through a series of international workshops and follow-up activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, our aim is to provide policy makers, donors, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders with new insights into the challenges of supplying village-level energy and how they might be overcome.

www.e4sv.org | info@e4sv.org | @e4SmartVillages

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Bridges for Enterprise

Bridges for Enterprise, a registered society at the University of Cambridge, supports Social Entrepreneurs, who employ “ground-up” sustainable solutions to tackle social issues. To date, Bridges for Enterprise has empowered social enterprise start-ups from countries including Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, India and Singapore. It has established partnerships with various stakeholders such as AsialIX, Centre for Global Equality, and has attracted with consultant mentors from McKinsey, BCG, Princeton University, NYU, Cambridge and LSE.

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